

**Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Board**

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**STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS  
SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY AND AUDIOLOGY BOARD  
Department of Consumer Affairs  
Medical Board of California  
1424 Howe Avenue  
Greg Gorges Conference Room "F"  
Sacramento, CA 95825**

**SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY PRACTICE COMMITTEE  
September 24, 2004  
MEETING MINUTES**

**Committee Members Present**

James Till, Ph.D., Chairperson  
Sherry Washington, M.A.  
Bruce Gerratt, Ph.D.  
Paul Donald, M.D.

**Staff Present**

Annemarie Del Mugnaio, Executive Officer  
Candace Raney, Staff Analyst  
Lori Pinson, Staff Analyst  
Albert Balingit, Legal Counsel

**Committee Members Absent**

Vivian Shannon, M.A.

**Board Members Present**

Rebecca Binge, M.A.  
Marcia Raggio, Ph.D.  
Alison Grimes, Au.D.  
Diana Verdugo, M.S.

**Guests Present**

Gail Ternes, California Academy of Audiology  
Kathy Matonak, California Academy of Audiology  
Barry Brokaw, California Academy of Audiology, Sacramento Advocates, Inc.  
Jody Winzelberg, Audiologist

## **I. Call to Order**

Chairperson Till called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

## **II. Introductions**

Those present introduced themselves.

## **III. Discussion of Speech-Language Pathology Assistants' Participation in Feeding Patients with Swallowing Disorders**

Mr. Till explained that this issue was initiated by a number of individuals who contacted the Board for clarification as to whether speech-language pathology assistants are authorized to engage in feeding therapy with patients who have swallowing disorders.

Ms. Del Mugnaio stated that this issue is confusing, as California Code of Regulations Section 1399.170.3 (h) defines duties that are outside the scope of practice of a speech-language pathology assistant and sets aside those duties that require a high level of technical skill or clinical acumen, including "swallow therapy with bolus material."

Ms. Del Mugnaio explained that the original intent of the regulation referred to diagnostic procedures and did not include routine feeding.

Ms. Washington stated that she believes the confusion may stem from the language in the regulation that refers to therapy. She stated that it may be necessary for the speech-language pathologist to evaluate the patient by feeding to determine a safe level of delivery. Obviously this would require a higher level of technical skill and would not be appropriate for a speech-language pathology assistant.

Mr. Till pointed out that many third-party payers will not provide reimbursement for feeding as a technical skill, supporting the position that certified nursing assistants, family members, etc. are appropriate caregivers to assist in routine feeding activities. He explained that, at times, a therapist is involved in feeding a patient to assess a patient's swallow function and intake tolerance and, in this case, would be providing a form of evaluation and/or therapy. However, in many other circumstances, feeding is a routine task and a form of patient management that can safely be administered by a number of people, including speech-language pathology assistants.

The Committee unanimously agreed with the discussed interpretation of the speech-language pathology assistant regulations in that the exclusion of "swallow therapy with bolus material" does not apply to routine feeding activities, but rather to diagnostic assessments or evaluations that should be performed by a licensed speech-language pathologist.

There being no further discussion, Chairperson Till adjourned the meeting at 9:45 a.m.

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Annemarie Del Mugnaio, Executive Officer